

(WASHINGTON) - U.S. Representative Chet Edwards secured federal funding to expand access to education and job training in Bosque County. The funding was included in the final 2010 Appropriations bill, which passed the House today by a vote of 221 to 202 and is expected to pass the Senate and be signed into law this month.

Edwards secured \$200,000 for vocational training and educational equipment for the Hill College Bosque County Campus. The new Bosque County campus is expanding to offer classes in technical fields, including welding technology, which has experienced large enrollment growth allowing the departments to provide trained welders for the service area industrial needs. This funding would allow for the purchase of welding and other equipment to facilitate these classes.

Edwards, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee said, "Expanding educational opportunities for local citizens will truly make a positive difference in their lives. Investing in workforce training will create jobs and bolster economic development in Bosque County."

Edwards also secured \$70,000 for the GEAR UP program to prepare at-risk junior high and high school students in Bosque and Hill Counties for college. GEAR UP is a joint partnership with Education Service Center-Region 12, local Independent School Districts, Hill College, Texas State Technical College, and McLennan Community College. GEAR UP-Education Service Center, Region 12 will serve as a community catalyst to increase the number of students who pursue advanced and enrichment courses, pass the state exam, and continue their education beyond the high school level. Edwards secured \$95,000 for the GEAR UP program in 2008.

Edwards said, "Investing in keeping Bosque County students in school means a more productive future for them and a stronger economy for all of us. With our economy slowly recovering from a deep recession, it is more important than ever before for students to further their education to help them prepare for the future, and I will continue to work with community leaders to support that goal. I want to commend community leaders for their strong support of this worthwhile program."

Tom Norris, Executive Director of Region 12 said, "We are thrilled about the additional funding because it will keep more students in school and prepare them to enter and succeed in college. Student success is a top priority for area schools and Education Service Center Region 12. The Bosque and Hill County schools as well as ESC Region 12 greatly appreciate Congressman Edwards for his continued support of this important program."

